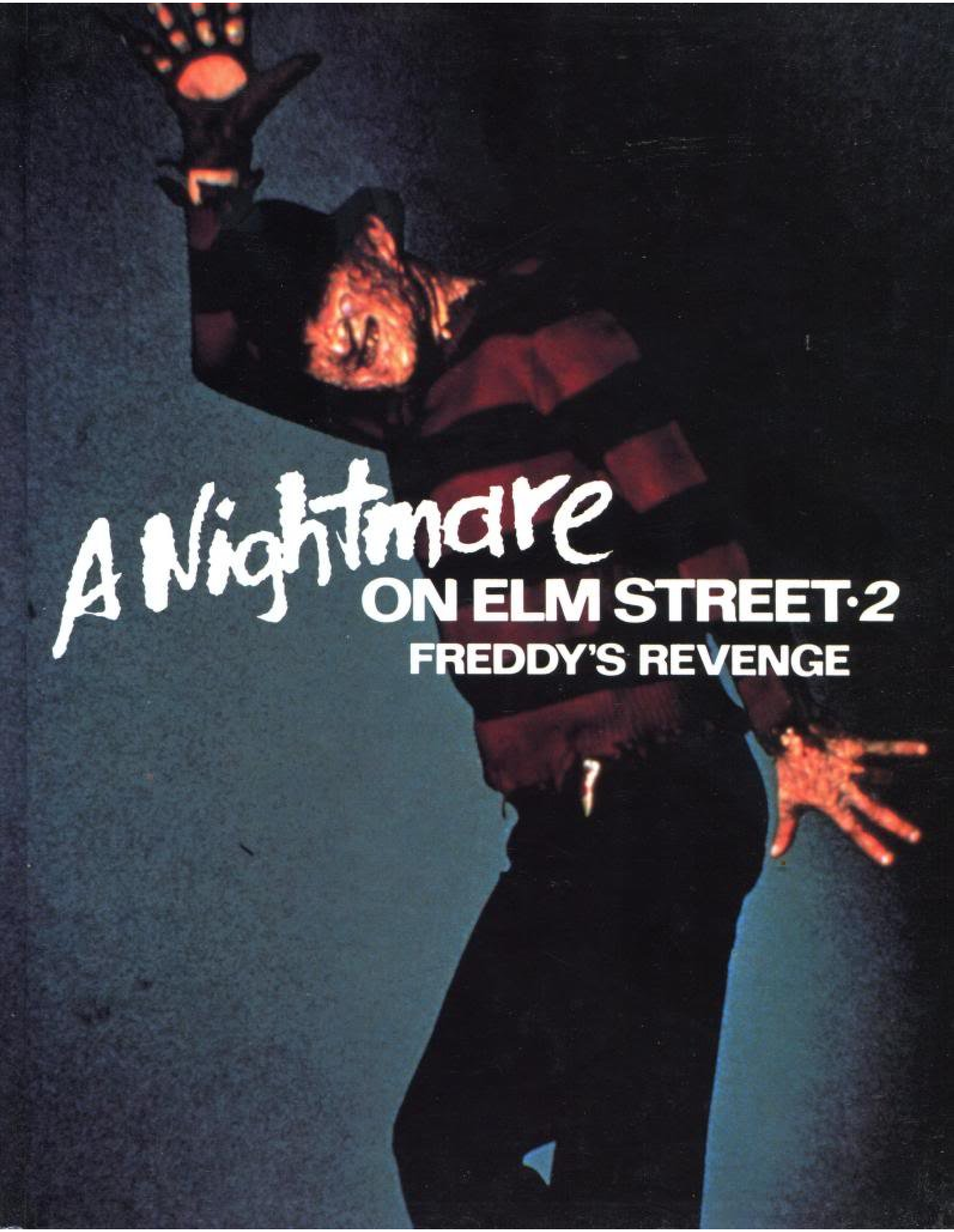

A Nightmare ON ELM STREET·2

FREDDY'S REVENGE

Abdo & Daughters Presents

A Nightmare On Elm Street 2
Freddy's Revenge

Written by: David Chaskin
Adapted by: Bob Italia
Based on the characters created by Wes Craven

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One

There were only a dozen teenagers on the bus, but the noise level was deafening. The girls were yapping and the boys were horsing around. Someone was adjusting a ghetto-blaster, trying to decide among several loud stations.

The bus turned a corner, heading out of the development and past some older homes spaced more widely apart. The driver downshifted and pulled over to the curb. Then he reached out to push the door lever open.

A large group of teenagers walked down the aisle and off the bus. The gears grinded and the bus pulled away. Now there were only a few teens remaining—two girls sitting together toward the center of the bus, and a lone, nerdy-looking boy sitting at the rear.

One girl stared at the boy for a moment, then turned to her friend and whispered something. The friend turned around and looked at the boy.

Then both let out an uncontrollable rush of mean giggles. Embarrassed, the boy looked down at the books in his lap while the bus, its engine revving, picked up speed.

One of the girls stood, ready to get off. She could see her mother and dog waiting just ahead along the curb.

But the bus raced past them and continued to pick up speed.

The girl's jaw dropped. "Hey!" she shouted to the bus driver. "Hey, that was our stop!"

The bus turned a sharp corner. The girl almost fell. The other girl gripped the seatback and lifted herself to her feet. "Hey," she cried, "let us off!"

The bus driver, wearing a battered old fedora, ignored their cries as the bus continued to pick up speed.

The sky had suddenly turned foul and wicked. A wave of threatening clouds swept overhead. The wind churned a row of weeping willows into a tangled mess of yellow tendrils.

The bus whined as it reached the top end of third gear. All its lights were flashing wildly. It flew past the last house in town and headed into open country.

One girl stepped into the aisle and made her way toward the front of the bus. Then she stopped suddenly and gasped as she watched the driver's arm throw the stickshift into fourth gear. His hand was clad in a strange glove that had a menacing set of razor-sharp, steel talons. His sleeve was charred and smoking.

The bus swerved wildly as it skidded around a corner, throwing its few passengers into collision courses with the walls and each other.

Then a flash of lightning crashed through the air.

As the thunder subsided, the sky fell dark. The bus screamed along, banging through rocks and ditches, crashing through a wall of overgrown brambles. Thick clouds of steam poured from under the hood and streamed past the rear of the bus.

Suddenly, one of the tires smacked into a jagged boulder, snapping the wheel from its axle. The front of the bus bounced to a violent halt, the bumper digging a long trench into the earth.

The teens picked themselves from the floor. It was very hot and smoky inside. Sweating and scared, the teens moved closer to each other. The boy tried frantically to open a window, but it would not budge.

Then he looked out the window and gasped.

The ground beneath the bus began splitting apart. Huge chunks of earth sheared themselves loose from the edges of the fissure that encircled the bus. They tumbled into oblivion. In moments, the bus was stranded on the narrow tip of a towering, crumbling ridge. It teetered precariously, touching the smoky abyss in every direction.

One girl was on her hands and knees in the aisle. She looked up toward the driver's seat. Seeing something hideous, she gasped and scrambled to her feet. Then she began backing off. The bus shifted dangerously, throwing the girl into the edge of a seat.

The driver slowly made his way toward the back. He was dressed in a filthy black and red sweater. Smoke rose from his body as if he had just stepped out of a horrible fire. His razor-talons swept along the tops of the seatbacks, cutting deep gashes into the green vinyl upholstery and scraping horribly over the tubular steel support poles.

Terrified, the boy stared at the awful talons, then looked out the window at the deadly drop. Sweating and panicking, the girls backed away, going from window to window, trying desperately to pull them down. But the windows were all locked tight. One girl reached for the emergency door lever at the rear of the bus. The lever came off in her hand.

The driver grinned evilly as he approached. Petrified, the teens huddled together, screaming. The driver lifted the awful, taloned glove. A flash of lightning illuminated his hideous face—the face of Freddy Krueger! He raised his weapon arm higher and higher—then struck!

Suddenly, an alarm went off. Jesse Walsh sat up in bed. Sweaty, scared and disoriented, he slammed his hand on the alarm and tried to shake the nightmare out of his head. Then he looked into a mirror. He was relieved to find that he no longer looked like the nerd in his dream.

Jesse got up and made his way past the half-empty cardboard cartons that littered his room. He got dressed, then headed for the kitchen.

"Morning," he mumbled to his mother who was at the stove cooking eggs.

"Morning, honey," his mom replied.

Jesse poured himself a glass of milk from the refrigerator. Then he joined his dad and his sister Angela at the breakfast table.

"You got your room straightened out yet?" his dad asked.

Jesse yawned. "It's getting there."

His dad frowned. "We've only been living here six weeks now. I want that room unpacked by tonight."

His mom approached with a plate of eggs and set it on the table. "Angela," she said, "what are you doing?"

Angela struggled to put her hand deep into a box of *FU-MAN CHEWS* breakfast cereal. "I'm trying to get the *Fu-Man Fingers!*" she whined.

Jesse stared at the box and frowned. Printed on the box was a cartoon caricature of an Oriental doctor pointing to a bowl of cereal with one of his long, sharp fingernails. A burst above the product name read: "Free Inside—Fu-Man Fingers!" It showed a hand wearing several extra-long, red plastic fingernails.

"Jesse?" his mom said.

"Huh?" Jesse replied.

"Eggs?"

Jesse rubbed his temples. "Oh...uh, no, just some milk, Mom."

"You okay?" she said.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just really hot upstairs."

His mother nodded, looking at her husband. "I know it's warm. I wish you'd call someone to check out the air conditioning, Ken."

"I know what's wrong with the air conditioning," Ken said defensively. "Just needs a shot of freon, is all."

"Dad's fixing something again," Jesse stated. "Hit the deck!"

There was a short silence as they all looked back to their plates.

"So, school going all right?" Jesse's mom said.

Jesse shrugged. "Okay, I guess."

"Making friends?"

Jesse looked around uncomfortably. "Yeah, you know how it is..."

Angela grabbed onto the prize at the bottom of the box and gave it a yank. A bagful of Fu-Man Fingers came out in her hand with half the box of cereal.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang. His mom turned to answer the door, but Jesse jumped up and cut her off. "That's Lisa," he said. "I gotta get to school." He rushed out of the kitchen.

"Who's Lisa?" Ken called out.

Jesse opened the front door. Lisa Poletti stood in the doorway. "Hi," she said with a smile.

Jesse's eyes lit up. "Hi," Jesse replied. Jesse stepped outside and led Lisa to his car—a beat-up, blue Ford Falcon parked curbside. "Your timing was perfect," he said. "I was getting the third degree in there."

"How come?" Lisa asked.

"Ah, nothing," Jesse replied. Jesse opened the car door for her. She stepped in and sat down.

The car interior was worse than the body. The upholstery was torn to shreds. The dashboard was cracked and peeling and there was a big hole where the radio used to be. A cheap, A.M. transistor radio hung by its wrist strap from the rear-view mirror.

Jesse hopped in and shifted around to get comfortable. He reached under the dash and pulled out a couple of bare wires.

Amused, Lisa watched him routinely twist the wires together. "Aren't you afraid somebody could steal your car like that?"

Jesse laughed. "Look at this car. Are you kidding?"

He sat up and flicked a toggle switch crudely drilled into the dashboard. Then he moved his finger to another alien button in the dash and pushed it. The starter turned over slowly. The engine backfired as the car sputtered to life.

Jesse gave the thumbs up sign to Lisa and put the car into gear. The car backfired, then rumbled up the street.

Meanwhile, in Jesse's backyard, Ken had the top of the power lawnmower off. He was adjusting the carburetor with a screwdriver.

Ken's wife came out the back door. She looked worried. "Shouldn't you be getting to work now? It's almost nine o'clock."

Annoyed, Ken shut off the mower. "It'll just be another minute." He picked up a wrench.

"You're going to get grease all over your suit!" she said.

"Me? Nah." Ken look over his domain with satisfaction and took a deep breath of fresh, suburban air. "I love it, don't you?"

"What?" his wife said.

"Our new house. The neighborhood."

She sighed heavily. "Of course I do, Ken."

"So what's the problem, Shirl?"

Shirley pointed behind her. "It's just I'll be a lot happier when you finish getting those bars off the windows."

Ken nodded as he looked at the bars on the upper windows. Ken had bought the old Thompson house on Elm Street—complete with the security paraphernalia that kept Nancy Thompson prisoner five years earlier!

"The people who lived here before must have been truly paranoid," Shirley said.

Two

Later that day, Jesse was in the boys' locker room of the high school. At the opposite end of a row of lockers was a tough-looking classmate, Ronny Grady. Both boys had just finished baseball practice and were getting dressed.

"So," Grady said after a long silence, "you live around here?"

"Not too far," Jesse said. "My folks bought a place over on Elm Street."

Grady stopped buttoning his shirt and looked up at Jesse. "Elm Street? You telling me you moved into that big white house with the bars on the windows?"

Jesse frowned. "Yeah, why?"

Grady shook his head and tucked in his shirttails. "You can tell your old man he's a real chump."

Jesse grew angry. "What are you talking about?"

"They've only been trying to unload that dump for five years. That place is bad news. Some chick was locked in there by her mother and she went crazy. She watched her boyfriend get butchered by some maniac in the house across the street. Her poor drunken momma took her own life right inside your front door."

Jesse stared at Grady with doubt. "You're full of it," he said with a nervous laugh.

Grady shoved Jesse into the lockers. Angered, Jesse shoved him back. The two were about to exchange punches when someone blew a whistle.

Jesse looked to the end of the row and saw Coach Schneider standing there with his arms folded. "Haven't had enough, eh?" Schneider said. "Okay, boys, let's run some laps."

Schneider sent Jesse and Grady out to the practice field where they ran their laps. It wasn't until the school parking lot was completely empty when Schneider sounded his whistle again. "Okay, boys," he called out, "hit the showers!"

Jesse and Grady returned to the locker room. This time, they kept their mouths shut.

§

Late that night, Jesse had trouble sleeping. He turned over on different sides and punched the pillow a couple of times. Then he stared into space and finally sat up.

Frustrated, Jesse gout out of bed, put on his jeans, then headed for the kitchen. The room was lit only by the glow of a full moon.

Jesse crossed the room to the refrigerator and opened the door. A juice bottle crashed to the floor. Startled, Jesse jumped back.

Regaining his composure, Jesse stepped to the sink and grabbed some paper towels. He glanced to the kitchen window and saw a grotesque face peering in. Jesse rubbed his eyes and looked again. The face was gone.

Jesse stopped a moment to slow his heart. He took a deep breath, stepped to the back door, and opened it. All was quiet. Nothing stirred.

Jesse strained to see past the shrubbery that surrounded the house. "Grady?" he said in a hoarse whisper. "It better be you!"

Jesse heard an awful sound—the sound of wood ripping!

With caution, Jesse made his way along the side of the house. He noticed a red-orange light flickering from behind a cellar window. He got down on his hands and knees to investigate.

Jesse saw an intruder bent over by the furnace, lit only by the raging fire within. The intruder wore a filthy black and red striped sweater and a battered hat. He put his hand into the flames and began digging for something in the back of the furnace. Then he pulled out a bundle of rags, set it on top the furnace and began unwrapping it.

Jesse was petrified. He stood up and looked around frantically. He didn't know what to do.

Jesse hurried out the gate that led to the front of the house. Entering the house, Jesse scanned the foyer. Then he headed toward the cellar door. It was ajar. The lock had been splintered as if by a huge wreaking bar. He could hear the roar of the furnace below.

Jesse stuck his head inside the cellar door and peaked down. He saw the shadow of a menacing figure moving along the cellar walls.

Jesse was breathing heavily, his brain whirling with fear. He pulled the basement door closed and held it tight. "Dad!" he screamed, looking around frantically. *"Dad!"*

Something began pulling the cellar door open. Jesse tried to hold it shut, but the powerful force continued to inch the door open.

Jesse let go and bolted for the foyer. Freddy stood in his path, a sick smile on his scarred face. He flashed his razor-knives at Jesse.

"Daddy can't help you now," Freddy said sinisterly.

Jesse tried to run away, but Freddy was too fast. His un-taloned hand gripped Jesse's shirt collar.

"I've been waiting five years for you, Jesse," Freddy said. "We got special work to do, you and me. Things are really gonna heat up."

Jesse struggled to free himself. Freddy tightened his iron grip and fanned his talons threateningly. Jesse's head stretched back from the choking pain.

"We'll do real good together, you and me," Freddy said. He hurled Jesse against the wall. "You got the body, I got the brains." Freddy removed his hat. There was no skull—just his squirming brain.

Jesse let out an agonizing scream.

Then his dad and mom crashed into the bedroom, and Jesse found himself laying in bed.

"Maybe we should call a doctor," Shirley said to Ken.

"No, I'm okay," Jesse said sitting up. "Really. Just a bad dream."

§

The following evening, Lisa, in her swimsuit, stepped out of a cabana in her backyard and approached the swimming pool. Stepping on the diving board, she bounced lightly and jumped off, cutting gracefully through the water and coming up in the center of the pool.

Mrs. Poletti, a pleasant-looking woman in her late 40's, slid open the patio doors and poked her head out. "There's a Jesse on the phone," she called out to Lisa.

"Okay, thanks," Lisa said. She swam to the edge of the pool and hoisted herself up. Throwing a towel over her shoulders, Lisa picked up a wireless phone from a patio table. "Jesse, hi," she said.

"Hi," Jesse said. "Listen, I can't make it tonight. My old man wants me to finish unpacking."

"Oh, that's okay," Lisa replied. "I understand. Parents can be real pains. I'll see you in the morning."

"Yeah, okay. See ya then."

Lisa hung up the phone and frowned.

§

Jesse stood at the foot of the bed, surveying the job unhappily and trying to figure out where to start. Finally, he pulled a shoe box from inside a larger carton, placed it on his desk and lifted the lid. It was full of cassette tapes.

Jesse rifled through the tapes, selected one, and popped it into a portable cassette player on the desk. Then he pushed the "play" button. Rock and roll music began blaring from the speakers.

Jesse approached a carton near the bookshelves. Reaching deep into the nearly empty box, he pulled out a stack of books which he plopped on the shelves next to other books already unpacked. Then he tossed the carton aside.

Now he was getting into the music, and he spun around to face the bureau. He opened a small box on the bureau while be-bopping along and pulled out a pair of sunglasses which he put on, practically dancing. Then he dumped the contents of the box haphazardly into a bureau drawer.

Jesse opened a large bureau drawer. He grabbed a nearby box and dumped it into the large drawer, smoothing it over with his hands. A Stetson cowboy hat was on top. He dropped it on his head and pulled it low over his eyes.

Jesse stepped before a full length mirror to get a look at himself. In one smooth move, in rhythm with the music, he swung around and moved to the desk. He dumped a small box of pencils and supplies into the desk drawer. As an afterthought, he grabbed a couple of pencils out of the drawer and drummed a few beats on his desk.

Finally, Jesse shoved the pencils up his nostrils, tucked his thumbs under his armpits and waved his elbows like a chicken. Spinning around and throwing his arms out, he stopped dead in his tracks.

His mom and Lisa were standing in the doorway. Shirley looked horrified. Lisa repressed a giggle.

Jesse hastily pulled the pencils out of his nose and dived for the stereo to turn it off. Beet-red, he tossed the hat and sunglasses onto the bed and tried to look nonchalant. "Hi," he said with embarrassment. Jesse looked to his mom. She took the hint to leave.

Lisa stepped into the room. "I told her you invited me over. I guess I should have called, huh?"

Jesse was glad to see her. He put the pencils in the desk drawer and shut it. "No, that's okay. I was just...unpacking."

"I know," she giggled. Lisa casually stepped over to a carton and peeked in. "I figured you might like some help."

Jesse smiled.

It did not take long for the room shaped up nicely. Only a few boxes remained. Jesse pulled a bundle wrapped in newspapers from a carton. He tore away the paper, revealing a baseball trophy. Then he placed it on a conspicuous corner of his dresser.

"Sweaters in the closet?" Lisa asked.

"Great," Jesse replied.

Lisa dragged a chair to the closet, lifted a pile of sweaters from an open box, stepped up on the chair and stacked the sweaters on a shelf. She started to step back down when something in the back corner of the shelf caught her attention. She reached in and pulled out a small, red leatherbound book. "What 's this?" she said.

Frowning, Jesse stepped over to look at the book. It was smaller than an average paperback. It had a matching leather thong that snapped into a small latch on the front cover. "I don't know," he finally said. "Looks like a diary."

Lisa raised her eyebrows and lowered herself down to sit on the chair. She snapped open the tiny latch and opened the book.

"Nancy Thompson, 323 Elm," she read aloud. "Hey, this thing is five years old!"

"You know her?" Jesse said.

Lisa shook her head. "Before my time." She turned a few pages and read aloud. "February 17th—my birthday. Daddy came by today with a big old stuffed bear for me. He took me to dinner and a movie and when we got back, he and Mother had another one of their fights. He left angry. I wish they would stop fighting."

Jesse waved the diary away, uninterested. He crossed back to continue unpacking.

"I think it's sad," Lisa said.

"Traumas of a ten-year-old," Jesse stated.

Lisa leafed through a few more pages, stopped, and began reading with widened eyes. "He comes to me at night. Horrible. Ugly. Dirty. Tearing at my nightgown with his steel claw."

Jesse snapped around and approached Lisa, snatching the book from her. Then he resumed the passage. "His name is Fred and he keeps taking me to the boiler room. He wants to kill me."

Jesse shivered. He turned the page and froze.

"What is it?" Lisa said.

Jesse showed her the page. There was one sentence scrawled across the next entry.

Tina is dead.

Jesse and Lisa looked at each other in horror. Jesse turned the page. "Rod's been killed. Just Glen and me now. Can't fall asleep!" Jesse's face turned white as he looked up at Lisa.

"Are you okay?" Lisa asked.

"Something Grady told me today about the people who lived here last. Girl went crazy—saw her boyfriend killed in the house across the street..."

Just then, Shirley poked her head into the room. "How's it going?"

Jesse hid the diary behind his back. "Okay."

Shirley looked over the room, impressed with the progress. "Looks great! Thought you might want to take a break—got some cold cider downstairs."

Lisa looked at Jesse's alarm clock. It was 8 P.M. "No...thanks," she said. "I better get back. Got a major paper due the end of this week."

"Well, its there if you change your mind," Shirley said before leaving.

"Are you sure?" Jesse said.

Lisa nodded with a sour expression. "World History. But I'll see you in the morning, right?"

Jesse nodded.

Lisa pointed to the diary. "Hot stuff. Let me know how it turns out."

Jesse opened the door. "I'll walk you downstairs."

§

Once Lisa was gone, Jesse poured a glass of milk in the kitchen and entered the living room. His mom wrapped a night-cover over the bird cage while his dad shifted uncomfortably in his recliner. "A little warm in here, huh?" he said, wiping some beaded sweat from his upper lip. Then he got up to check the thermostat.

Jesse's eyes widened. He noticed the intense heat in the room immediately.

"It's 97 degrees in here!" Ken announced. He pulled off the cover-plate and began fiddling with the coil. Suddenly, a loud squawk filled the room. Everyone looked up. Jesse put his milk down on the TV and hurried over to the bird cage, ripping the cover away.

One of the budgies was attacking the other.

Jesse threw open the door and tried to pull the attacking bird away. The budgie attacked Jesse's hand, drawing blood.

As Jesse pulled out his arm, the bird flew into the living room, screeching with an eerie war cry unnatural for its size.

The bird circled around the ceiling, then dived for Ken, cutting a deep gash under his eye. The budgie seemed much larger than it was before—twice its original size! "Get a broom or something!" Ken cried.

The bird swooped down, heading for Angela. It crashed into a lampshade, knocking it to the floor. The bird fluttered to the ceiling and hovered near a light fixture. It opened its mouth and emitted a guttural growl.

Shirley returned with a broom and handed it to Ken. As he lifted the broom to his shoulder, the bird screamed again and dived for Jesse. Jesse threw his arm out to block the attack. Ken swung at the bird. He missed, demolishing the table lamp.

The bird hovered in the air, puffing up and growing angrier. Just as it seemed ready for a last lethal attack, the bird exploded into flames.

The family looked at one another in horror and disbelief. The only sound in the room was Angela, attached to her mother's leg, whimpering quietly.

§

Later, Ken dumped an odd assortment of hand tools on the kitchen table. He picked through them, selecting a pipe wrench and a screw driver. Then he approached the stove and attempted to pull it from the wall. "Help me with this thing!" he shouted at Jesse.

"It's not the gas, Dad!" Jesse said.

"Don't tell me it's not the gas!" Ken snapped, yanking on the stove. "Your mother thought she smelled gas."

"I wasn't sure, Ken," she said timidly.

"All right then, what is it?" Ken growled. "Bird rabies? That cheap seed you've been buying? There's got to be an explanation. Animals just don't burst into flames for no reason!"

"Well, it sure isn't leaky gas pipes," Jesse said.

Ken looked angrily at Jesse. "You set this all up, didn't you? One of your sick jokes?"

"What are you talking about?"

"You know what I'm talking about. What did you use, a firecracker? A cherry bomb?"

"I don't have to listen to this!" Jesse shouted. He stormed out of the kitchen.

"Come back here!" Ken said.

"Ken!" Shirley yelled.

Ken looked blankly at the wrench in his trembling hand. "I don't know...I don't know, Shirl. He used to be a good kid."

§

Late that night, Jesse emerged from his room and eased the door shut as quietly as possible. He stopped to listen for any signs of his parents, then stepped lightly past their room.

Descending the stairs, Jesse made his way to the cellar door. He stopped momentarily, losing his nerve. Then he finally turned the knob and opened the door. He pulled an overhead chain, flooding the cellar with light. No sign of the intruder.

Jesse descended the stairs and stepped to the furnace. He squatted down and opened the firebox door. Then he reached in. Horrified, he felt something. He pulled out an object wrapped in rags.

Jesse unwrapped the object. It was an old, leather glove with a row of rusty knife blades protruding from the fingers.

Suddenly, the furnace switched on with a roar. Flames leaped out of the firebox.

"You like my little trick with the bird?" a voice laughed sinisterly.

Jesse reeled around.

Freddy was just across the room.

"Who are you?" Jesse said.

Freddy snickered.

"What do you want?" Jesse asked.

"Go ahead, Jesse. Try it on for size!"

Jesse looked at the glove. The blades were gleaming and sharp. He threw the weapon to the floor and ran for the stairs. But then he tripped over some empty cartons and fell hard to the floor. Regaining consciousness, Jesse realized that the furnace has stopped.

Freddy was gone.

As he struggled to his feet, Jesse noticed the glove on the floor where he dropped it—shiny and new as the day it was made!

Three

The next morning, Jesse entered the kitchen. Everyone was at the breakfast table, picking at their food. No one seemed particularly hungry.

Jesse poured himself a cup of coffee and stared at his father. "Why did it take them five years to sell this house, Dad?"

Ken shrugged his shoulders. "Couldn't get the right price, I suppose."

"And you don't know anything about the murder across the street and a crazy girl who lived here—who saw the whole thing?"

Shirley looked at Ken with surprise.

"I don't know," Ken said angrily. "They told me something about it, yeah. What difference does it make?" Then he met Shirley's stare. "Oh, come on, Shirl, how'd you think we got such a good deal? Listen, all old houses have stories."

"Did they tell you she went totally out of her mind—that they had to put her away?" Jesse said. "And that her mother killed herself in our living room?"

Angela stepped close to her mother. "Mommy, I'm scared."

Shirley comforted her. "Jesse and Daddy are just making believe, sweetheart. I don't think we should be talking about this now."

Ken glared at Jesse. "You see what you are doing? Now I don't want to hear another word about it. There's nothing wrong with this house!"

Shirley began sniffing the air. "Something burning?"

She looked to the counter-top. The toaster was glowing red-hot. Suddenly, flames began leaping out of the bread slots.

Shirley gasped as Ken jumped to his feet. He grabbed a dish towel and began beating out the fire. Then he turned away from the smoldering toaster, tossed the towel aside and headed back to the table. "Craziest thing I ever saw," he said. "It wasn't even plugged in."

Jesse put his cup down hard on the counter and walked out. The screen door slammed behind him.

§

Later that morning before school, Jesse took Lisa to McDonald's. When they arrived, Jesse unrolled the bundle of rags he found in the furnace and let the finger knives drop with a clatter on the car seat.

Lisa picked up the glove and examined it with interest. "This is amazing! Your dream told you where this was?"

Jesse nodded. "Only it was more like, you know, sleepwalking. All I know is I woke up on the cellar floor next to it." He reached into his knapsack and pulled out the diary. "Forget about going back to sleep after that. I was up all night. I finished reading this. It gets real crazy toward the end, after all the death stuff. But then she said something really freaky—about her mother taking her down to the basement to show her the glove. That's when she started talking about Fred Krueger."

Lisa was wide-eyed. "Who?"

"Fred Krueger. The guy in her dream who's coming to kill her. Seems he was a real guy, ten years before. He went around kidnapping kids and killing them."

Jesse and Lisa drove to school and walked down the main corridor to their lockers.

"Maybe you were having a premonition or something," Lisa said. "You know, like those guys who help the police solve crimes and find missing people. You ever had anything like this happen before?"

Jesse paused to think. "No, never. You think that's what it is?"

"I don't know. Can I look at that diary for a little while?"

Jesse raised his eyebrows, reached in his bag and handed the book to Lisa.

Before she could go on, they were interrupted by a squeaky voice.

"Hi, guys," Kerry said.

"Hi, Kerry," Lisa replied.

"I got your invitation yesterday," Kerry said to Lisa. "Any cute guys gonna be there?"

Lisa sighed. "All of them."

"Your dad picking the music again?" Kerry said.

Lisa smiled. "Mom's trying to keep him upstairs." Then she looked at Jesse. "Last party I had, Dad insisted on playing nothing but Benny Goodman records all night."

Suddenly, the class bell rang.

Lisa leaned over and kissed Jesse. "I'll see you later, okay?"

Taken by surprise, Jesse walked off with Kerry. "I may be late," he shouted. "Baseball practice."

§

Baseball practice took a lot longer than Jesse anticipated. He barely had enough time to shower before meeting Lisa in the parking lot.

Jesse plopped down on the bench and slowly pulled off his jersey. Grady approached and sat in front of his locker.

"You hit the ball pretty good, Walsh," Grady said.

"So do you, Grady. Schneider shouldn't have called you out on that double."

"Yeah, well, Schneider's as blind as a bat."

"He *always* blows those close calls," Jesse complained.

Suddenly, someone blew a whistle behind them. Jesse turned around and saw Coach Schneider standing there with a wicked grin. "You boys never learn, do you? Ready for some laps?"

When Jesse finished running his laps, the school parking lot was nearly empty. Jesse's car was parked in the center. Lisa was leaning against it, a stack of books at her side.

Jesse approached. "Sorry I'm late. Coach Schneider kept me late again."

"I just got here myself," Lisa said. "Went to the public library. Cut four classes!"

Jesse opened the car door for her. She picked up her books and climbed in. Jesse ran around to the other side and slid in beside her. Then he looked at the books. "What's all this?"

"Research," she replied. Then she kissed him. "C'mon, let's go for a ride."

Jesse started the Falcon, then it rolled down the highway.

"I'm convinced you've had a genuine psychic vision," Lisa said. "At first, I wasn't sure because you said that you never had anything like last night happen before. But I found out that most people have the potential for tuning in to the other world and never do. It has something to do with the environment—like they have to be in a place that's sending signals."

Jesse looked puzzled. "Like a haunted house, right? I don't believe in ghosts."

"You don't have to. You just have to believe in energy. Look, you got electricity in your body, right?"

"Yeah, I know...synapses, neurons..."

"And heat and chemical reactions," Lisa said. "Where does it all go when you die?"

"I don't know—into the air, I suppose."

"What about essential energy—the soul? Does that go into the air, too? You think there's good energy and bad energy? Make a left at this corner."

"Where are we going?" Jesse asked as he turned at the intersection.

Lisa smiled mysteriously. "It's a surprise."

They came upon an old generating plant that once served a small town. Now it was rundown and obsolete. The building was charred and the grounds were littered with rubble. The entrance to the plant was boarded up and plastered with NO TRESPASSING signs. Many boards were missing, providing easy access for the scores of vandals who had torn through the complex from time to time. There were no windows at ground level, but the top of the building was lined with many multi-paned frames. All were either cracked or missing.

“What is this place?” Jesse asked as he stopped the car.

“Remember in the diary—Nancy said that she kept finding herself in a boiler room? Fred Krueger worked here. It’s an old powerplant—a steam generator!” She pulled out several papers and handed them to Jesse. One of the headlines read: “SPRINGWOOD SLASHER ARRESTED.”

“What’s this?” he said.

“I did some reading up on our friend, Fred Krueger,” Lisa replied.

Jesse leafed through the papers. Each was a front page from the local newspaper. “KRUEGER FREED ON TECHNICALITY! D.A. RESIGNS.” “JUSTICE DONE—KRUEGER KILLED BY MOB! SPRINGWOOD SLASHER DIES IN HELLISH INFERNO.”

Jesse took a deep breath. He and Lisa climbed out of the car and slipped between a pair of boards. Now they were inside.

Jesse could see the remnants of a large boiler room. Huge steel pipes jutted out of the floor in a tangle of elbows and valves and a clutter of debris. A maze of catwalks wound around the machinery. “This place is incredible,” he said. “How long has it been closed down?”

“A long time,” Lisa said. “Ever since I was a kid. Come on.”

They moved deeper into the plant.

“Fred Krueger kidnapped twenty kids and brought them here to die,” Lisa said. She shivered. “So, you feeling anything?”

“What do you mean?”

“I thought you might be able to make a connection.”

Jesse shrugged his shoulders. Then he put his hand to his mouth. "Any ghosts here?" he called out.

"Come on, cut it out," Lisa said.

"Well, what am I supposed to do?"

"I don't know. Concentrate or something."

Jesse shifted his legs and stared at the ceiling. Then he closed his eyes. "I feel like a jerk."

"Shhh! Just concentrate."

Jesse walked around in a small circle, keeping his head up and his eyes closed.

"Anything?"

Jesse shook his head, then paused. "Wait..."

He walked slowly across the room until he came to a board leaning against the foot of the mesh-iron stairway that led to the catwalks. He placed his hand on the board and pulled it away.

A large rat, in her nest with her young, snarled at him.

Jesse and Lisa jumped into each other's arms.

Jesse and Lisa returned outside and walked along the outskirts of the building to a cluster of shade trees. Lisa hoisted herself up on a boulder and looked at the building.

"Disappointed?" Jesse said.

"About what?"

"About not finding any bogey men?"

Lisa smiled. "I'll get over it."

Jesse drew close and they stared at each other.

"You are sensitive," Lisa said. "I mean you sensed that the rat was there. And I can feel something about you. Sometimes I feel like I know what you're thinking."

Jesse put his arms on her shoulders. "Yeah?"

"Maybe it only happens when you're sleeping—that's the way it was with Nancy, wasn't it?"

"Now there's an idea we can take off on. Maybe we should drive out to the beach tonight and lay out a couple of blankets...until I fall asleep."

Lisa smiled. "Maybe we can do that—strictly scientific, of course."

"Nancy went bonkers from this thing. You wouldn't be afraid of being out on the beach with a potential lunatic?"

"Ghostbusters are fearless," Lisa said.

Jesse embraced Lisa and kissed her on the lips. Suddenly, he groaned in pain and stood upright, tearing from their embrace.

"What is it?" Lisa said. "What's wrong?"

Jesse held his stomach. "I don't know—a sharp pain." Finally, the agony lifted from Jesse's face. "It's gone now."

"Oh, Jesse," she said, putting her arms around him. "Jesse, this is no good. You've got to go home and get some sleep. You've got to!"

§

Jesse was jogging around the outer edge of the gym, ready to collapse from exhaustion. Coach Schneider was leaning against a wall, watching Jesse run.

As Jesse came around for another lap, Schneider reached out and grabbed him.

"Hit the showers," Schneider barked.

Jesse entered the boys' shower room and let the hot water hit his face.

Meanwhile, Schneider entered his office and approached a huge, padlocked cabinet on the wall. He unlocked it and opened the doors. The cabinet was filled with dumbbells, jump-ropes, baseball bats, and other athletic equipment.

Schneider selected a pair of jump-ropes and set them down on his desk. Suddenly, he heard a pinging sound. He went to the door and looked out into the hall. The hall was empty.

Schneider turned back into his office. Then he heard another pinging sound. He looked up at a tennis racquet hanging on the wall. Two strings were broken. Just then, another string began smoking, then snapped with a ping.

Before he could investigate, a basketball fell out of the equipment cabinet and bounced on the floor at Schneider's feet. Schneider bent down to pick up the basketball—and two more balls jumped out onto the floor.

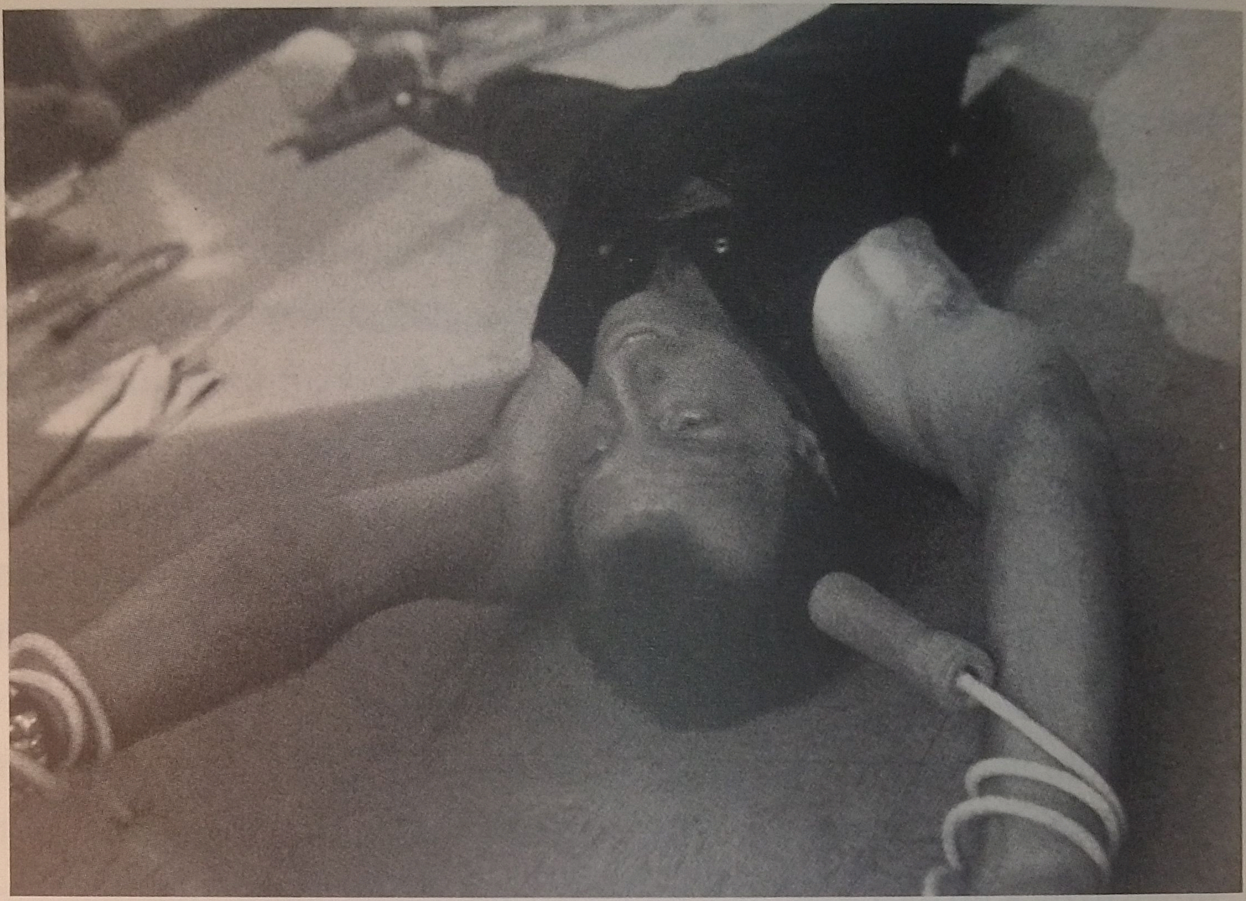
Then another ball flew out and knocked over a trophy on his desk.

Schneider's eyes flew open as a dumbbell vaulted out of the cabinet and streaked by his ear. He hit the floor as another dumbbell shot across the office and crashed into a window, cracking the thick wired glass.

Schneider crawled along the floor to the cabinet as basketballs, volleyballs, and a medicine ball flew overhead. Then he reached up to close the cabinet doors.

Suddenly, a jump-rope on the desk unraveled like a harpoon line and wrapped around Schneider's wrist. The other end pulled hard and yanked Schneider off balance.

As he reached with his free hand to unwrap his wrist, a second rope launched off the desk and secured itself to his other wrist. The office door

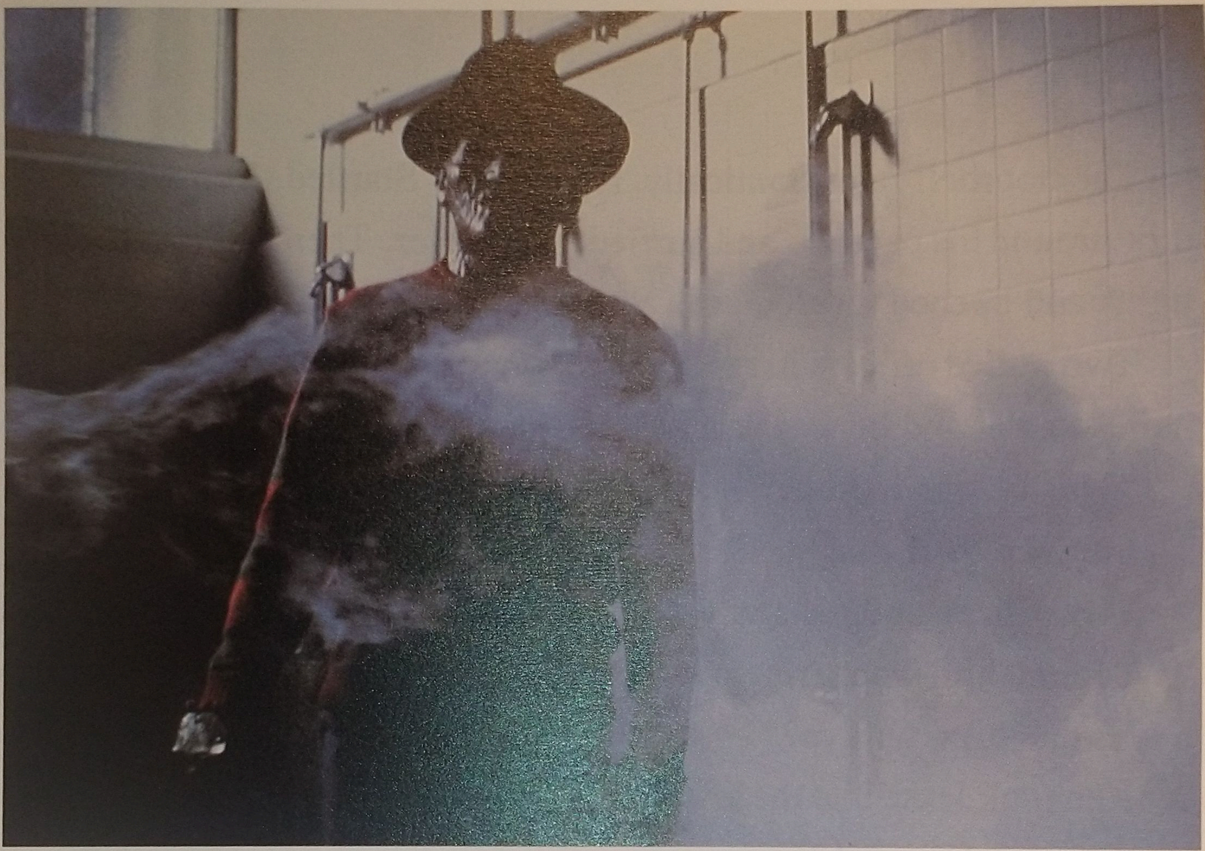


opened by itself. Then the ropes dragged Schneider from the room as he screamed.

Back in the shower room, Jesse frowned as the shower head next to his gurgled and sprang to life. Suddenly, all the showers were on, spewing water and steam.

Jesse gazed in horror as Schneider, still screaming, was dragged by ropes into the shower room. The ropes shot up to two shower nozzles and hoisted the coach into a helpless spread-eagle, facing the wall. Then his shirt was torn away like sheets of tissue paper. Terrified, Jesse turned away.

The room filled with great clouds of steam. Suddenly, a dark human form appeared in the corner.



Dressed in a black and red sweater and battered fedora, the figure cut through the steam clouds and approached Schneider. It drew back its weapon arm and struck quickly. Schneider screamed, then went limp.

Jesse lifted his head and stared at his right hand. Then he shrieked in horror. He was wearing Freddy's glove. "No...oh, please, no..." Jesse slowly dropped to his knees and stared up at the heavens. *"NO!"* he screamed.

§

The doorbell rang frantically, repeatedly. Startled, Ken wrapped a robe around his pajamas and hurried to the foyer. Then he flicked on the lights and opened the door. Shirley was right behind him.

Two police officers in rain slickers stood on either side of Jesse. His hair was wet and he was wrapped in a blanket.

"This belong to you?" a police officer said to Ken.

Stunned by the sight, Ken just nodded.

The officer nudged Jesse across the threshold. Jesse stumbled in. "We found him wandering out on the highway," the officer said. "Keep a leash on him, will ya?"

Ken took Jesse into the kitchen and sat him at the table. Shirley made some tea and poured Jesse a cup.

Ken paced the floor angrily. "Okay, we're gonna put our cards on the table, here and now. There's not going to be any retribution—no fire and brimstone. I only have two questions. You'll answer them and we'll all go to bed, okay?"

Jesse nodded weakly.

"Okay," Ken said, "what are you taking and who are you getting it from?"

Jesse shook his head in disgust. "I'm not taking drugs, Dad. Can I go to bed now?"

"Sure, go ahead," Shirley said.

Ken glared at Jesse as he got up from the table and left the room. Then he stared at Shirley. "No question about it—he's on something."

Four

The next morning, Jesse stormed from the house and rushed to his car. Ken was standing on a ladder, unbolting a set of security bars from the windows.

"Jesse, please," Shirley said from the doorway, "let's talk about this!"

"I'm okay," Jesse insisted. "Just leave me alone." He climbed into his car and began starting it.

Shirley turned to Ken. "He needs professional help. I think we should take him to a psychiatrist."

"Are you nuts or something?" Ken said. "What is that going to do?"

"I don't know! I just feel he needs help and we don't know how to give it to him. Don't fight me on this."

Ken shifted on the ladder. "He needs a kick in the butt, is what he needs. He needs a methadone clinic!"

Jesse's car backfired, and it rumbled down the street. He drove as quickly as he could to Lisa's house. She was waiting for him at the curb. Lisa climbed in, then they headed for school. Jesse remained silent the entire time.

"Jesse, please tell me what's wrong!" Lisa said as they approached the school parking lot.

Jesse stared straight ahead. "I'm fine. Nothing's wrong."

"You didn't say more than two words to me the whole way here. You had another nightmare, didn't you?"

"Yeah, I had a bad night."

"You want to talk about it?"

Jesse looked at her. "My dad thinks I'm on drugs. My mom thinks I'm crazy and I'm not sure I don't agree with her."

Jesse turned a corner into the school parking lot.

Then he slammed on the brakes.

A crowd of students gathered in a ring outside the gymnasium doors leading to the practice field.

"Oh, God," Jesse muttered. He threw open the door, jumped out and ran toward the crowd. Bewildered, Lisa chased after him.

As Jesse drew closer, he could see the entire area was cordoned off with yellow plastic ribbons. Police officers and officials came in and out of the gym. A teacher tried to disperse the students, clapping his hands together and pushing through the crowd.

Jesse stopped at the edge of the barricade and craned his neck to see what was going on.

Suddenly, Grady appeared at his side. "Hey, man, where have you been?" Grady said. "Schneider got wasted last night!"

Jesse swallowed hard and tried to regain his composure. “Oh, God. I’m gonna be sick.”

“He must have been working late and some fruitcake came in and sliced him up like a kielbasa,” Grady said. “In the shower! Left bloody footprints all over the—”

Jesse clamped his hand over his mouth and broke for some bushes against the building. Grady looked at a horrified Lisa and gave a puzzled shrug.

§

Later that day, in the school cafeteria, Lisa and Kerry were on the lunch line, sliding their trays along the rails. Kerry was wearing a Walkman. The volume was turned up.

“That was something this morning, huh?” Kerry said. “About Schneider, I mean.”

Lisa nodded and took a plate of macaroni and cheese from one of the kitchen staff.

“Jesse sure took it bad, didn’t he?” Kerry said.

Lisa shrugged and moved her tray toward the cashier. Then Lisa and Kerry joined Jesse and Grady at a lunch table.

Jesse sat motionless, a tray of food in front of him, untouched.

“Look,” Grady said, his mouth full, “I’m sorry about Schneider, man. I didn’t know you were so close.”

Jesse didn't respond.

"You want to go out to a movie or something tonight?" Grady said. "Get your mind off things?"

Jesse shook his head.

"You going to Lisa's party tomorrow night?" Kerry asked Grady.

"I can't," Grady said. "I'm grounded."

"How come?" Kerry asked.

"For throwing my grandmother down a flight of stairs," Grady said jokingly.

Kerry nodded gravely.

"You should eat something," Lisa said to Jesse. "You'll feel better."

"I'm not hungry," Jesse replied.

"I wish you'd talk to me," Lisa said. "We can figure it out, you know. We can figure it out together."

"There's nothing to figure out."

"You're wasting your time," Grady said. "The guy's a basket case."

"Shut up, Grady," Jesse snapped.

Grady pushed his tray aside. "You want me to shut up? Fine, I'll shut up. See you around, buddy." Grady stormed from the table.

Deeply pained, Lisa looked at Jesse. He avoided her stare until he dropped his head into his hands and tried not to cry in front of the others. He composed himself quickly and dug into his lunch, forcing down some macaroni.

§

That night, in Jesse's house, an intruder rushed up the basement steps to the main floor. Its steps quickened as it crossed the foyer and began climbing the stairs to the bedroom level. Then it stopped at Angela's room and opened the door.

Angela was sleeping soundly, peacefully.

The intruder crossed the room to the bed. Its menacing shadow crept over Angela's sleeping form. A taloned glove pulled off the blankets. Then it emitted a guttural, inhuman voice.

"Wake up, little girl," it said.

Angela's eyes fluttered open. She looked up at the intruder and smiled. "What time is it?"

Jesse's glazed eyes cleared. He was drenched in sweat and hunched over as if all the muscles in his body were twisted around each other. The sound of Angela's voice softened him. He slowly straightened up and looked about the room in confusion.

"It's...it's late," he whispered. "Go back to sleep."

Angela nodded and closed her eyes.

Jesse started to pull the covers over her—then stopped as he stared in disbelief at his right hand.

He was wearing Freddy's glove.

Jesse covered his sister and left for his room. He shut the door, turned on a desk light, then clicked on the TV. Jesse sat on the floor in front of the door, knees against his chest. There was no way he was going back to bed.

Five

The next night, Jesse went to Lisa's pool party. The entire pool area had been decorated lavishly. Japanese lanterns were strung above the fence that rimmed the back yard. A long table on the patio was covered with festively arranged salads and condiments. The bright underwater lights made the blue water shimmer crystal clear. And a Benny Goodman dance tune was blaring through some outdoor speakers.

Scores of girls and boys scampered around, eating, swimming, and flirting with each other. Mr. Poletti stood over a gas grill, wearing a "Kiss the Cook" chef's hat and apron, cooking up a mess of hamburgers and hot dogs.

Lisa and Mrs. Poletti stepped from the house carrying more plates of food. Lisa saw Jesse sitting in a lounger, alone. He looked worried and detached.

Mrs. Poletti stared at Lisa for a moment, then took the plates and set them on a table. Then she approached Mr. Poletti and began pulling him away from the grill. He finally relented and turned his spatula, hat, and apron over to one of Lisa's guests. Then Mrs. Poletti escorted him into the house. "We're going to bed now," she said to Lisa.

"Thanks, Mom," Lisa replied.

"Twelve-thirty, Miss," Mr. Poletti said to his daughter. "No later."

Lisa nodded. "I promise." Then she approached Jesse. "Can we talk?" she said.

Jesse reluctantly got up from the chair and led Lisa into a cabana. They sat on a wide wooden bench along the wall.

"I think I'd better go," Jesse said. "I'm just not into it tonight. I'm sorry."

"Why won't you talk to me?"

"Will you leave me alone? Please."

"You're not being fair to me. I'm worried about you and I want to help you get through this thing."

"What are you going to do? How are you going to help? I'm losing my mind. I don't want to have you watch me fall apart."

Lisa put a comforting arm on Jesse's shoulder. "It's okay, Jesse."

Jesse took her hand and held it tight. "I'm afraid to go to sleep. I'm afraid to stay awake. I'm ruining your party. They're gonna put me away for sure."

"We'll figure it out together. We'll stay up all night if we have to. I won't let anything happen to you." Lisa kissed him ever so gently, then again. Jesse embraced her—then felt his body twitching. Jesse pushed himself away and scrambled to his feet.

Lisa looked puzzled and upset. “What’s wrong?”

Jesse was visibly shaken. “I’ll see you.”

Lisa looked at Jesse helplessly as he slipped out the cabana door.

§

Grady was in his bed, sleeping on his back, dead to the world. Suddenly, a hand clamped over his mouth as a light flicked on.

It was Jesse. He had climbed in through the open bedroom window.

“Hey, man, you scared me to death!” Grady said, scrambling out of bed. “What are you doing here?”

“You gotta let me stay here tonight, Grady.”

“Are you nuts or something?”

“Listen to me, Grady. This is serious. Something really weird is happening. It started out like just bad dreams—but it’s getting real bad!”

“Aw, will you get out of here! Go and take a sleeping pill or something.” Grady flopped back down on his bed and put his arm over his eyes. “In fact, take a whole bottle and do the world a favor.”

Jesse sat on the edge of the bed. “I killed Schneider, Grady.”

Grady lifted his arm from his eyes and stared at Jesse in disbelief.

“Only it wasn’t me,” Jesse continued. “I was there but it was like something inside of me, moving me around. Then last night it made me go into my sister’s room. And tonight, with Lisa in the cabana. I felt it happening again.” He grabbed Grady’s arm. “It wanted me to kill them, Grady!”

Grady frowned. “You’re nuts, you know that?”

“I’m scared, Grady. I know it sounds crazy. But there’s some *thing* trying to get into my body.”

Grady sneered.

"Look," said Jesse, "I don't care if you believe me or not..."

"I believe you. You had some scary dreams, okay?"

"No!" Jesse shouted in frustration. "I don't know—everything's all mixed up! What difference does it make? I'm in trouble here. I need your help!"

Grady nodded. "Okay, schmuck. What do you want me to do?"

"Just watch me. If anything weird happens—like if I start dreaming weird or try to walk out of here, you gotta try to bring me out of it. Hit me over the head if you have to. Just don't let me leave."

Grady looked down at the floor, sighed, and nodded.

"And Grady?"

Grady looked up.

"Don't fall asleep!"

§

Lisa sat on a lounge chair, her eyes red from crying. Her friend Patty sat next to her, trying to offer comfort. It was getting late, and the party was winding down.

"Why don't you just call him?" said Patty.

"He won't talk to me," Lisa replied tearfully.

"Well, you're not doing him or yourself any good sitting here and worrying."

Lisa looked at Patty. "I should go see him, but....I don't know, the party and all..."

"Go ahead. I'll hold down the fort."

Lisa smiled and got up. "Thanks, Patty. You're a pal."

§

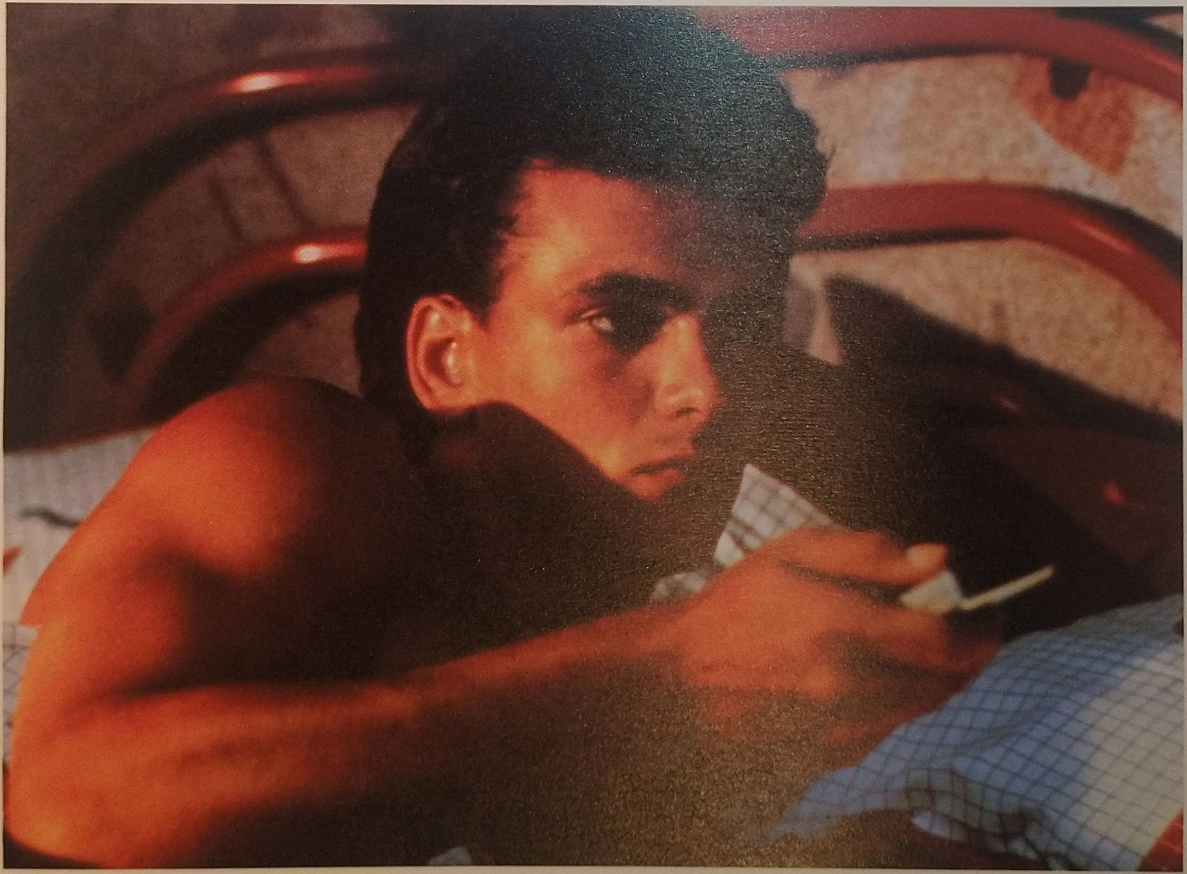
Grady sat on the bed, staring at the TV. He turned to Jesse, slumped in a nearby chair, asleep. Jesse was wearing a filthy black and red sweater.

Grady shook his head. "Sweet dreams, buddy." Grady turned off the reading light by the bed. He gave a final look at Jesse, then waved disgustedly at him before laying down.

Suddenly, Jesse's eyes flew open. "Grady?"

Grady mumbled, then faced Jesse. "What?"

"It's happening again."



Grady turned on the reading light in time to see Jesse curled up in pain on the floor. Then he flailed about as if shocked by 1000 volts. Grady scrambled out of bed and danced around Jesse, not knowing what to do.

Suddenly, Jesse raised his hand and spread his fingers apart. Four steel razor-knives sprung from Jesse's fingers like long, switchblades. It seemed like some crazed beast in Jesse's gut was trying to get out. A red cloud of powdery mist enveloped Jesse...

...then Freddy Krueger burst from the mist!

Grady backed toward the door. "No...*no!*" he cried.

Freddy just stood there with an evil smile. He put on his battered hat.

Grady tried desperately to get out, but the door wouldn't open. Freddy cackled evilly as he cut off Grady's screams by grabbing his throat with his unarmed hand. He pushed Grady up against the door and lifted him off the floor. Then he drew back his knife-hand and prepared to strike.

Grady's parents heard their son's screams. They rushed to the bedroom door and began pounding on it. "What's going on?" Mr. Grady shouted. "Open the door, Ronny!"

Mr. Grady threw his shoulder with all his might against the door, but it wouldn't budge.

Inside the bedroom, Jesse came to. He gazed in horror at Grady's body, slumped against the bedroom door. Then he saw the knife-blades on his right hand.

Jesse saw his reflection in a full length mirror on the wall—the image of Freddy Krueger! "No!" he screamed. "No! No! No! You killed him!"

Jesse hurled the glove at the mirror, cracking it. Freddy's mocking image remained, his evil cackling laugh filling the room.

Y CA

Six

Lisa hurried down the steps, crossing the foyer floor to the front door. As she opened it, Jesse collapsed in her arms. Jesse was bloody and bruised. His clothes were torn and dirty.

Panic seized Lisa. "Jesse—what happened?"

Jesse was hyperventilating. "I killed him! I killed him! I killed Grady, Lisa. I killed Schneider. And now, he's inside me!"

Lisa looked around frantically as she held Jesse tight in her arms. "Who, Jesse?"

"He's just waiting to take me—when I sleep!"

"Who? Who is doing this to you?"

"Freddy Krueger! He's been trying to get hold of me, to use me. He needs me to get out of his world into ours. He's gonna take me again!"

"No, Jesse, this isn't happening! It's gotta be everything you've taken in—Schneider and the diary and the glove. Only it's all mixed up!"

Frustrated, Jesse pushed away from her. "How can I make you understand? He tried to make me kill Angela last night! Look at the blood on my hands!" Jesse began sobbing. "Oh, no. I did that to Grady." Then he grew sober. "He owns me."

Lisa put her arm around him and stroked his head, trying to calm him. "I'm not gonna let anyone take you from me. There's got to be a reason. We'll figure it out together." Then she paused. "Wait a minute! Wait here for me. I'll be right back!"

Jesse dragged himself into the study and Lisa hurried off.

§

Wearing Mr. Poletti's apron and hat, the boy stood faithfully by the barbecue, cooking the hot dogs and hamburgers. Suddenly, the platter of hot dogs attached to the barbecue began exploding and bursting into flames. Soon, the entire platter was ablaze.

The boy picked up the flaming platter and tossed it on the grill. Then he slammed the lid down with a crash. The others hooted and howled, and there was a scattering of applause.

But as the boy began bowing for his bravery, the soda pop cans in a nearby cooler began exploding. Geysers of soda pop shot up toward the sky.

The boy's eyes widened. "What's going on here?"

§

Lisa returned to the study with the leather diary. She opened it as Jesse looked over her shoulder.

"Something Nancy said—her last entry," Lisa said, flipping the pages. Then she read aloud: "He is evil itself. I know, now that I brought him into my world. We all did...gave him all the energy he needed. Our screams were all he needed. Now I will take it back—deny him." Lisa looked at Jesse. "She wasn't crazy. All this really happened. You can fight him."

Jesse looked confused.

"Remember what I said?" Lisa stated. "About the good energy and bad energy? He thrives on bad energy. Hate, anger, fear. He *is* bad energy. You've been afraid of him."

Jesse winced in pain and put his hand to his stomach. "Oh no, he's coming back! Get out of here, Lisa!"

Suddenly, the window slammed shut and locked. Frightened, Lisa looked behind her and back to Jesse. "Fight it, Jesse!" she said frantically.

The front door slammed shut. Its deadbolt turned with a loud snap. Then other doors in the house slammed tight, their locks latched firmly.

§

Drenched in sweat, Mr. Poletti sat up with a start. "What was that?" He jumped out of bed, threw on a robe, then approached the door. He tugged on the doorknob, but the door wouldn't open.

"What is it?" Mrs. Poletti said.

"The lock's jammed." Then Mr. Poletti noticed that all the bedroom windows were steamed up.

Suddenly, a blast of music from the clock radio startled them. Moments later, the clock began melting. The music groaned to a stop as the amber dial-lamp died.

§

Jesse doubled over in pain. Lisa put her hands on his shoulders and shook him, trying to bring him out of it. The heat was so intense that both sweated profusely, their clothes sticking to their wet bodies.

"You created him," Lisa shouted, "you can destroy him! He lives off your fear. Fight him, Jesse! Fight him!"

"I can't!" Jesse cried painfully.

Tiny bubbles rose to the top of the aquarium tank. The angelfish floated to the surface of the water.

"You're not afraid of him! He doesn't even exist!"

Just then, the TV burst to life with a blast of sound. Sparks shot out, and the TV fell silent.

The water in the aquarium boiled over. The glass shattered and the carpet was flooded with a wave of steaming water.

Finally, a red fog enveloped Jesse as Lisa looked on in disbelief.

§

Kerry was in the pool. Steam rose off the surface. The water seemed strangely rough. "Hey," she called out, "can somebody turn down the heater?"

Suddenly, the Japanese lanterns began to brighten as if there was a power surge. The bulbs began bursting one by one, scattering a group of screaming teenagers.

The pool water began bubbling, choking the surface with steam. Kerry's body turned lobster-red, and she tried to swim to the ladder at the low end of the pool.

But the water grew hotter and more turbulent, and the random waves kept pushing her back toward the deep end. "Help!" Kerry cried.

Several boys rushed to the fence to pull down a life-hook hanging on a bracket. Other teens stood around in shock, wondering what was happening.

§

Lisa watched a razored hand scrape up the wooden panel of the desk. It gripped the desktop, cutting four deep notches into the scrolled edge-molding.

Lisa gasped. Freddy was standing before her.

"He can't fight me," Freddy laughed hideously. "I'm him."

Freddy approached, flashing his razor-knives. Lisa looked about the room for an escape route. But there were none.

Lisa pulled an afghan from the back of a chair and thew it at Freddy. Then she ran out of the study and slammed the door behind her. Enraged, Freddy chased after her.

Lisa rushed to the front door, grabbed the knob and pulled. The door was locked. "Jesse!" she cried. Panic-stricken, she turned to run.

Freddy leaped across the room at Lisa and grabbed her by the foot. But Lisa squirmed free. Freddy lunged at Lisa. The blades wedged deeply in the oak floor.

Terrified, Lisa raced into the kitchen as Freddy tried to pull the knives from the floor.

Lisa frantically scanned the room. She ran to the sliding glass doors leading out to the pool and hurled aside the drapes. On the other side of the glass, five teens tugged wildly on the door and banged on the glass, trying to get in.

Lisa turned toward the counter and spotted a wooden knife-block filled with gourmet cutlery.

Then Freddy crashed into the kitchen.

Lisa grabbed the thickest handle and unsheathed the long knife from the block. The five teens outside the glass doors stared, aghast.

Freddy stopped in the center of the room as Lisa held the knife in her fist. "Jesse, help!" she shouted.

"I'm Jesse now, Lisa," Freddy said. He chuckled as he raised his weapon, rhythmically clicking the blades together.

Lisa tried to summon the courage to plunge the knife in Freddy. But then Freddy's expression changed suddenly.

"Go ahead" Jesse's voice said. "Defend yourself!"

Lisa was devastated by the sound of Jesse's voice coming from within Freddy.

Then Freddy was himself again. "Yes, go ahead, Lisa. Use the knife!"

Lisa began quaking and her knees weakened. Then she closed her eyes and dropped the knife, prepared for the worst.

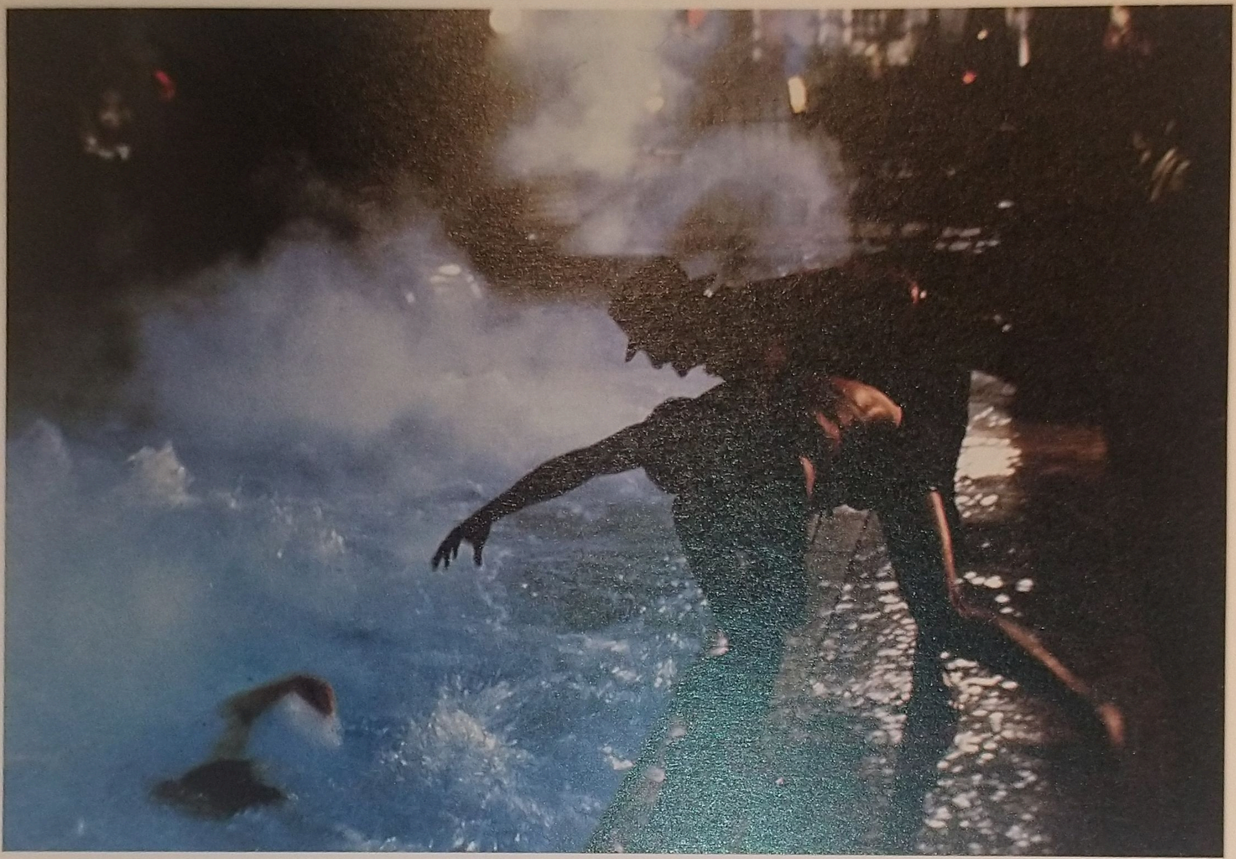
Moments later, she opened her eyes, wondering why she wasn't dead. Freddy was still standing there. But he was staring at her with an odd expression.

A frown of confusion distorted his ugly face. His lower lip quivered slightly.

Suddenly, Freddy threw her aside. "Nooo!" Jesse's voice cried. Then Freddy lunged through the glass doors to the pool area. The glass shattered into a million shimmering pieces.

Freddy was gone.

The pool stopped swirling. Kerry coughed and shook as she was helped from the water and wrapped in towels by some friends.



Many teens were huddled in little groups. Some were crying. Others just looked at the shattered remnants of the party in disbelief.

Some teens moved closer to the shattered glass. They touched it and examined it, looking for some explanation.

Suddenly, Glen Miller music began blaring from the speakers. Everyone looked around in confusion.

Freddy violently burst through the poolside deck. The teens screamed and ran at the terrible sight of him. The pool began churning and boiling. Freddy fanned open his razor knives. Then he grabbed a teen and tossed him into the boiling pool.

§

Mr. Poletti listened to the uncomfortable silence. He looked at the door as it unlatched with a soft snap. Wary, he didn't move. Then he opened the door and scrambled down the stairs, Mrs. Poletti close behind.

Mr. Poletti burst into the kitchen and found Lisa slumped against a wall. He knelt down beside her.

"Thank goodness she's all right!" Mrs. Poletti said.

Mr. Poletti looked up at the sound of the poolside screaming. He rushed across the room to the shattered glass and looked out in horror.

Teens rushed toward the fence, screaming, as Freddy chased them. Others broke for the gate, but the padlock was secure.

Mr. Poletti turned white. He backed away and looked to his wife and daughter. "Get her out of here!"

Mrs. Poletti helped Lisa to her feet.

"He couldn't do it, Momma," Lisa said groggily.

"Do what, baby?"

"He couldn't hurt me."

Mr. Poletti ran into the study and swung a chair into the gun case, shattering the glass door. He grabbed a shotgun, made sure it was loaded, then headed for the pool.

Outside, the hysterical teens were trapped, frozen with fear. Freddy stood before them and spread his knife-fingers.

"You are all my children!" he roared.

Just then, a shot rang out. Several teens dived for cover.

Mr. Poletti stood by the edge of the pool and gave the shotgun a second pump. He raised the weapon again, but Lisa rushed up to him and pushed the barrel of the gun down.

"What are you doing?" Mr. Poletti said furiously.

Freddy looked at Lisa. He turned on his heels and walked through the fence, burning a hole through it and the shrubbery. When he was gone, all that remained was smoke and flame.

“Where did he go?” Mr. Poletti said.

Lisa put her hand to her mouth.

She knew.

Seven

Lisa hopped in Jesse's car. She flicked the toggle and pushed the starter button. Nothing. Then she remembered the two wires under the dash and twisted them together. She pushed the start button again. The starter groaned.

"Please work," she said frantically.

The car backfired and started. She threw it into gear and pulled away from the curb.

Squinting in the darkness, Lisa drove wildly, trying to hold the road. When she arrived at the old powerhouse, she pulled up to the building and shut off the engine. Then she climbed out of the car and rushed to the entrance of the building.

The entrance was guarded by a pair of mangy wild dogs with eerie, unnatural faces. They growled threateningly as she approached.

Showing no sign of fear, Lisa stepped to the entrance. The dogs snapped at her hands, but she didn't pull them out of the way. The dogs parted, allowing her to pass through.

Lisa walked in cautiously. The powerhouse looked much different than it did in the daylight. Steam leaked from between rusty rivets and torn gaskets. She could hear the pounding of ancient expansion tanks belching out rancid air. The interior was bathed in an electric blue light that intermittently washed pale as hot white arcs flashed in distant corners.

Lisa walked in deeper, carelessly touching a large steam pipe. She retracted her hand quickly from its blistering sting.

Lisa began climbing the rusted metal stairway up to the catwalk. Then she was overcome by the sound of scraping metal. Frightened, she stopped and looked around. Then she stepped onto the catwalk.

The catwalk seemed to give way. Lisa plummeted as if she were dropped through a trap door. Her arms flailed over her head, but her hand managed to grab a handrail.

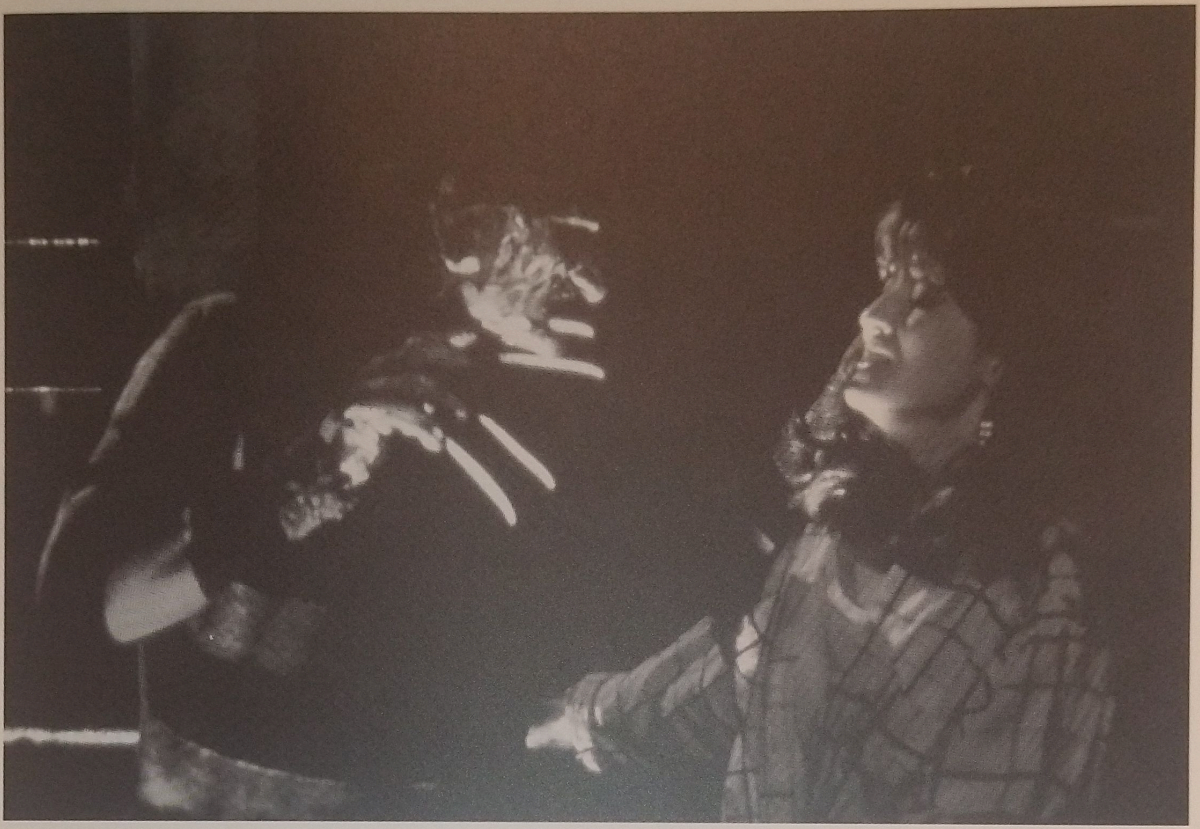
Lisa pulled herself up and turned around.

Freddy stood before her.

"Had your chance," he said, raising his talons.

Lisa screamed and ran back toward the stairway. The stairway was red hot and smoking.

Freddy chased after her. "Come to me, Lisa—I'm waiting for you!"



Lisa stopped short of the stairway and looked around desperately. But there was no escape. She turned to face Freddy. "Oh, Jesse, I know you're there! Stop him!"

"Jesse's dead, Lisa. Freddy's here!"

"I want him back," Lisa said bravely. "Jesse, talk to me!"

Freddy stared at her, talons frozen in mid-air. The horrible hand quivered, as if against an unseen force.

Lisa broke past him and started running. But then she stopped and whirled around.

Freddy was leaning weakly against the railing, an expression of confusion on his face.

No longer afraid, Lisa became angry. Freddy beckoned her with the knife on his index finger. “Come and get me, Lisa,” Jesse’s voice said.

Lisa stepped toward Freddy. “I’m not afraid of you. You couldn’t kill Angela. You couldn’t kill me. He’s in there and I want him back. I’m gonna take him away from you and you’re going back where you belong!”

“Jesse’s dead!” Freddy insisted.

Lisa moved even closer and locked her eyes on his. “Come back to me, Jesse. I love you, Jesse. Come back to me.”

Freddy seemed in great pain. He dropped to one knee. Lisa moved closer. He tried to move away.

“He can’t hold you, Jesse. He’s losing his grip. You can get out.”

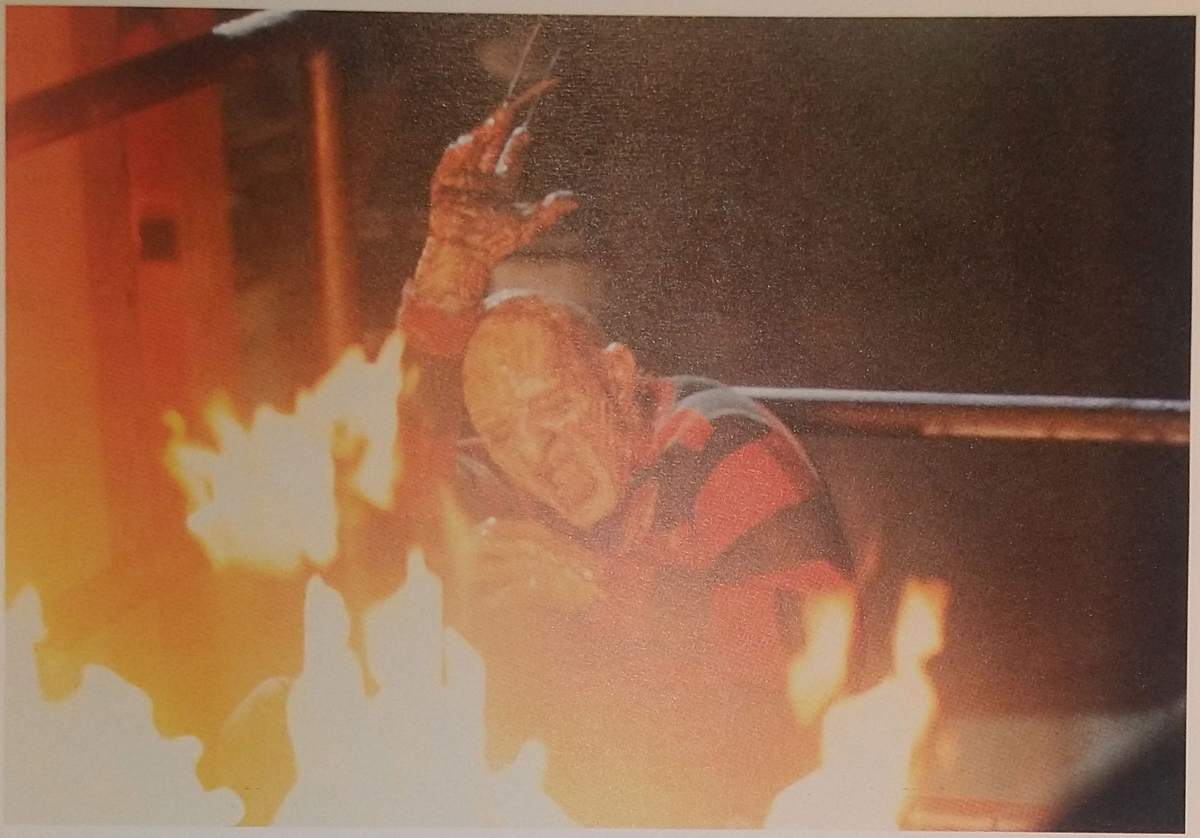
“He’ll die with me,” Freddy said.

Lisa knelt beside Freddy. She took off his hat and began stroking his head. He writhed and moaned in fright. Then she gathered all her nerve and moved closer.

Freddy lifted his deadly hand and pressed it to her chest. She flinched in pain but continued to press closer. He moved his blades onto her back, trying to push them into her flesh. But he was too weak.

Locked in a strange embrace, Lisa kissed Freddy.

There was a moment of silence, then smoke began rising off Freddy. He pushed her away with an excruciating scream.



The sound of pounding machinery became deafening. The electric flashes fired more rapidly and arced across the power plant. The room rapidly heated up. Small fires began breaking out on the catwalk around Freddy. Steam shot up from every pipe joint. Surrounded by flames and smoke, Lisa watched it all with fear and amazement.

Then Freddy burst into flames.

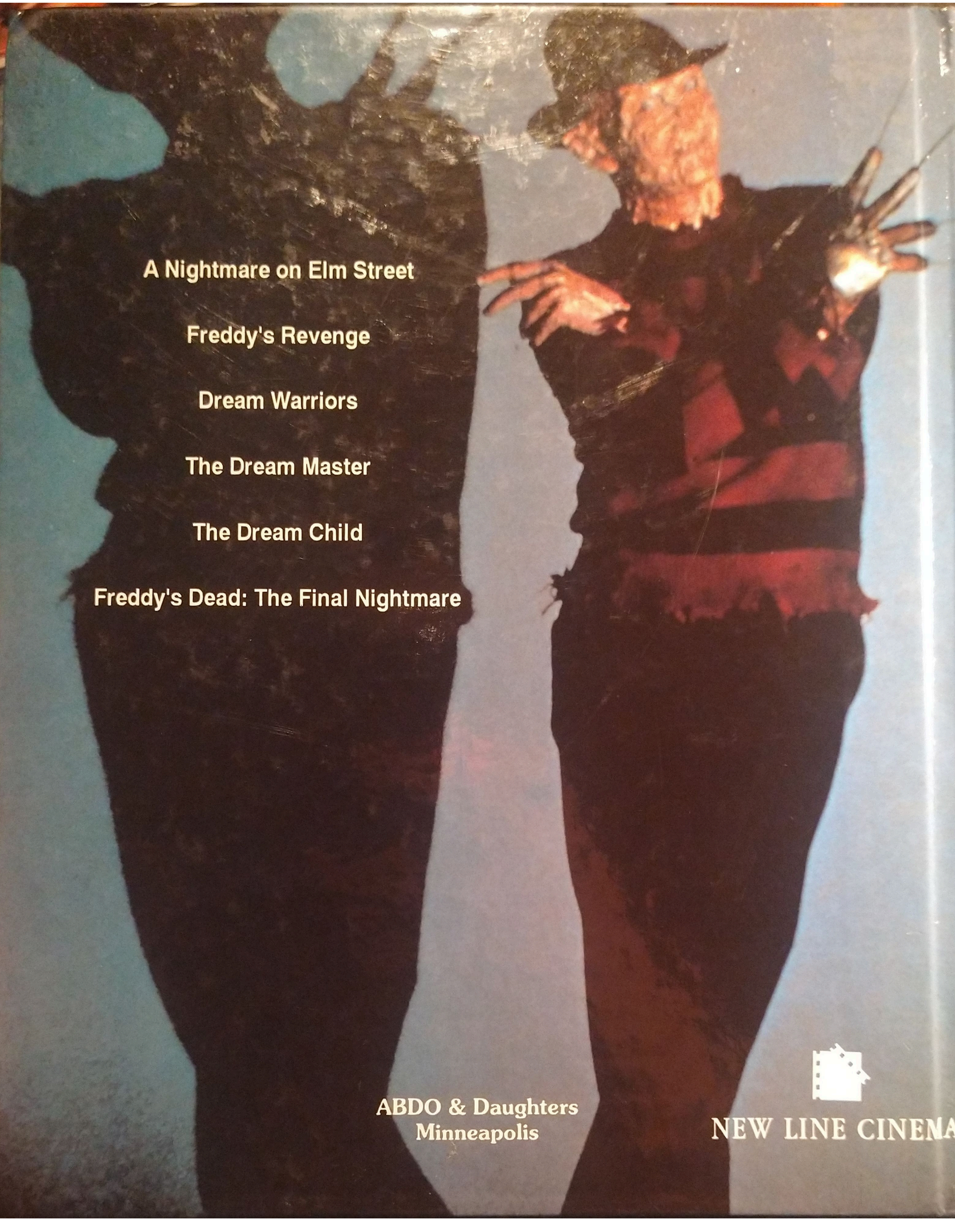
The power plant went insane. The steam, smoke and flames all reached their peak. Pipes burst with steam. Valves spun wildly and flew off.

And then everything began dying down. The flames on Freddy's body disappeared. The deafening noises vanished. And the terrible heat had turned into a cool blue light.

Suddenly, the smoldering corpse began to stir. Lisa backed away, terrified. Then the corpse turned to her.

It was Jesse. His clothes were smoldering, his body was singed and blackened with soot. But he was alive—and coming around.

Lisa rushed to him and cradled him in her arms. The nightmare was finally over.



A Nightmare on Elm Street

Freddy's Revenge

Dream Warriors

The Dream Master

The Dream Child

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare

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